

A
T R E A T I S E

OF

Good Taste in the Art of

Musick

Dedicated

To His Royal Highness

FREDERICK PRINCE OF WALES

by

F. Geminiani

L O N D O N M D C C X L I X



P R E F A C E.

TWO Composers of Musick have appear'd in the World, who in their different Kinds of Melody, have rais'd my Admiration ; namely *David Rizzio* and *Gio. Baptista Lulli* ; of these which stands highest in Reputation, or deserves to stand highest, is none of my Business to pronounce : But when I consider, that *Rizzio* was foremost in point of Time, that till then Melody was intirely rude and barbarous, and that he found Means at once to civilize and inspire it with all the native Gallantry of the SCOTISH Nation, I am inclinable to give him the Preference.

But Melody, tho' pleasing to All, seldom communicates the highest Degree of Pleasure ; and it was owing to this Reflection, that I lately have undertaken to improve the Melody of *Rizzio* into Harmony, by converting some of his Airs into two, three, and four Parts ; and by making such Additions and Accompanyments to others as should give them all the Variety and Fullness required in a Concert.

How far I have succeeded in this Attempt, those who are most conversant in the Art, are the fittest to judge : But how difficult it was to succeed in it, No-body can judge better than myself (not to destroy the Simplicity and Beauty, I found required some Discretion) But to add new Parts on the same Principles, and to create Harmony without violating the Intention of the Melody, required an equal Mixture of Imagination and Judgment.

The Subject of the last Work that I made public, was four favourite Airs, all of them *English, Scotch or Irish*, which I diversify'd with a great Variety of Movements, as well with Regard to the Melody as Harmony and Modulation, which not only those who aspire to the Art of composing, but such as would be good Performers on the Violin, Violoncello, Flute and Harpsichord, ought to be thoroughly acquainted with.

The Ingenious will discover, at the first View, that the present Work is wholly unlike both in Style and Manner : But then I hope they will discover also, that for the same Reason, it is likely to be so much the more useful ; and so much the more entertaining in the Performance.

I do not pretend to be the Inventor of either : other Composers of the highest Class have been Adventurers in the same Voyage ; and none with more Success than the celebrated *Corelli*, as may be seen in his fifth Composition upon the *Aria della Follia di Spagna*.

I have had the Pleasure of discoursing with him myself upon this Subject, and heard him acknowledge the Satisfaction he took in composing it, and the Value he set upon it.

The Impossibility that has always been thought to attend this Undertaking : The Imputation of Negligence it may seem to cast on former Professors : and the Envy that generally attends every new Discovery in the Arts and Sciences, have hitherto deferr'd my publishing these Rules of Singing and Playing in a good Taste. But at last preferring the Benefit of the Public to all Manner of other Considerations, I have determined no longer to conceal an Article of such Importance, which will be even beneficial to some grumbling Professors, as well as to true Lovers of Musick.



Edme Bouchardon in. & del. 1742.

Ravenet Sculptor 1742.

An INTRODUCTION to a good Taste in MUSICK.

WHAT is commonly call'd good Taste in fingering and playing, has been thought for some Years past to destroy the true Melody, and the Intention of their Composers. It is supposed by many that a real good Taste cannot possibly be acquired by any Rules of Art; it being a peculiar Gift of Nature, indulged only to those who have naturally a good Ear: And as most flatter themselves to have this Perfection, hence it happens that he who sings or plays, thinks of nothing so much as to make continually some favourite Passages or Graces, believing that by this Means he shall be thought to be a good Performer, not perceiving that playing in good Taste doth not consist of frequent Passages, but in expressing with Strength and Delicacy the Intention of the Composer. This Expression is what every one should endeavour to acquire, and it may be easily obtained by any Person, who is not too fond of his own Opinion, and doth not obstinately resist the Force of true Evidence. I would not however have it supposed that I deny the powerful Effects of a good Ear; as I have found in several Instances how great its Force is; I only assert that certain Rules of Art are necessary for a moderate Genius, and may improve and perfect a good one. To the End therefore that those who are Lovers of Musick may with more Ease and Certainty arrive at Perfection, I recommend the Study and Practice of the following Ornaments of Expression, which are fourteen in Number; namely,

1st A plain Shake (/) 2^d A Turn'd Shake (+) 3^d A superior Apogiatura (♯) 4th An inferior Apogiatura (♭) 5th Holding the Note (-) 6th Staccato (|) 7th Swelling the Sound (/) 8th Diminishing the Sound (\) 9th Piano (p.) 10th Forte (f.) 11th Anticipation (♯) 12th Separation (♭) 13th A Beat (//) 14th A close Shake (~) From the following Explanation we may comprehend the Nature of each Element in particular.

(First,) Of the PLAIN SHAKE.

The plain Shake is proper for quick Movements; and it may be made upon any Note, observing after it to pass immediately to the ensuing Note.

(Second,) Of the TURNED SHAKE.

The turn'd Shake being made quick and long is fit to express Gaiety; but if you make it short, and continue the Length of the Note plain and soft, it may then express some of more tender Passions.

(Third,) Of the Superior APOGIATURA.

The Superior Apogiatura is supposed to express Love, Affection, Pleasure, &c. It should be made pretty long, giving it more than half the Length or Time of the Note it belongs to, observing to swell the Sound by Degrees, and towards the End to force the Bow a little: If it be made short, it will lose much of the aforesaid Qualities; but will always have a pleasing Effect, and it may be added to any Note you will.

(Fourth,) Of the Inferior APOGIATURA.

The Inferior Apogiatura has the same Qualities with the preceding, except that it is much more confin'd, as it can only be made when the Melody rises the Interval of a second or third, observing to make a Beat on the following Note.

(Fifth) Of Holding a NOTE.)

It is necessary to use this often; for were we to make Beats and Shakes continually without sometimes suffering the pure Note to be heard, the Melody would be too much diversify'd.

Sixth

(Sixth) Of the STACCATO.

This expresses Rest, taking Breath, or changing a Word; and for this Reason Singers should be careful to take Breath in a Place where it may not interrupt the Sense.

(7th and 8th) Of SWELLING and FALLING the SOUND.

These two Elements may be used after each other; they produce great Beauty and Variety in the Melody, and employ'd alternately, they are proper for any Expression or Measure.

(9th and 10th) Of PIANO and FORTE.

They are both extremely necessary to express the Intention of the Melody; and as all good Musick should be compos'd in Imitation of a Discourse, these two Ornaments are designed to produce the same Effects that an Orator does by raising and falling his Voice.

(Eleventh) Of ANTICIPATION.

Anticipation was invented, with a View to vary the Melody, without altering its Intention: When it is made with a Beat or a Shake, and swelling the Sound, it will have a greater Effect, especially if you observe to make use of it when the Melody rises or descends the Interval of a Second.

(Twelfth) Of the SEPARATION.

The Separation is only designed to give a Variety to the Melody, and takes place most properly when the Note rises a second or third; as also when it descends a second, and then it will not be amiss to add a Beat, and to swell the Note, and then make the *Apogiatura* to the following Note. By this Tenderness is express'd.

(Thirteenth) Of the BEAT.

This is proper to express several Passions; as for Example, if it be perform'd with Strength, and continued long, it expresses Fury, Anger, Resolution, &c. If it be play'd less strong and shorter, it expresses Mirth, Satisfaction, &c. But if you play it quite soft, and swell the Note, it may then denote Horror, Fear, Grief, Lamentation, &c. By making it short and swelling the Note gently, it may express Affection and Pleasure.

(Fourteenth) Of the Close SHAKE.

This cannot possibly be described by Notes as in former Examples. To perform it, you must press the Finger strongly upon the String of the Instrument, and move the Wrist in and out slowly and equally, when it is long continued swelling the Sound by Degrees, drawing the Bow nearer to the Bridge, and ending it very strong it may express Majesty, Dignity, &c. But making it shorter, lower and softer, it may denote Affliction, Fear, &c. and when it is made on short Notes, it only contributes to make their Sound more agreeable; and for this Reason it should be made use of as often as possible.

Men of purblind Understandings, and half Ideas may perhaps ask, is it possible to give Meaning and Expression to Wood and Wire; or to bestow upon them the Power of raising and soothing the Passions of rational Beings? But whenever I hear such a Question put, whether for the Sake of Information, or to convey Ridicule, I shall make no Difficulty to answer in the affirmative, and without searching over-deeply into the Cause, shall think it sufficient to appeal to the Effect. Even in common Speech a Difference of Tone gives the same Word a different Meaning. And with regard to musical Performances, Experience has shewn that the

the Imagination of the Hearer is in general so much at the Disposal of the Master that by the Help of Variations, Movements, Intervals and Modulation he may almost stamp what Impression on the Mind he pleases.

These extraordinary Emotions are indeed most easily excited when accompany'd with Words ; and I would besides advise, as well the Composer as the Performer, who is ambitious to inspire his Audience to be first inspired himself, which he cannot fail to be if he chuses a Work of Genius, if he makes himself thoroughly acquainted with all its Beauties ; and if while his Imagination is warm and glowing he pours the same exalted Spirit into his own Performance.

Explanation of the *Acciaccatura* for the *Harpsichord*.

The *Acciaccatura* is a Composition of such Chords as are dissonant with Respect to the fundamental Laws of Harmony ; and yet when disposed in their proper Place produce that very Effect which it might be expected they would destroy.

No Performer therefore should flatter himself that he is able to accompany well till he is Master of this delicate and admirable Secret which has been in use above a hundred Years : and of which a great many Examples may be found in the Book which I have compos'd for that Instrument.

The Example which follows, has however something in it peculiar, as it serves to specify a Signature called *Tatto*, which has a very great and singular Effect in Harmony, and which is perform'd by touching the Key lightly, and quitting it with such a Spring as if it was Fire.

Thus I have collected and explain'd all the Ingredients of a good Taste, and nothing remains but to caution the Performer against concluding, that a mere mechanical Application of them, will answer the great Purpose of establishing a Character among the Judicious in all Arts and Sciences, something must be left to the good Sense of the Professor ; for as the Soul informs the Body, so every Rule and every Principle must be enforc'd by the Knowledge and Skill of him who puts it in Practice.

Lastly, as the chief End I have in view, is to contribute as far as my Abilities will permit, to the Perfection of an Art that I love, and to rescue the Character of Musician from the Disgrace and Contempt which the Follies of ignorant Pretenders have brought upon it, I hope no acknowledg'd Master will lend his Countenance to the Misconstruction which those Pretenders may think their Interest to pass upon it.

To say All in few Words, the Road to Emulation is both open and wide ; the most effectual Method to triumph over an Author is to excel him ; and he manifests his Affection to a Science most who contributes most to its Advancement.

When I came first to *London*, which was Thirty-four Years ago, I found Musick in so thriving a State, that I had all the Reason imaginable to suppose the Growth would be suitable to the Excellency of the Soil.

But I have lived to be most miserably disappointed ; for tho' it cannot be said that there was any want of Encouragement, that Encouragement was ill bestow'd.

The Hand was more considered than the Head ; the Performance than the Composition ; and hence it followed, that instead of labouring to cultivate a Taste, which seem'd to be all that was wanting, the Publick was content to nourish Insipidity.

Architecture, on the contrary, at that Time was in a very deplorable State, and yet in the same Interval, it has risen to its Meridian under the Protection of a most noble and intelligent LORD ; and under a Patronage yet more illustrious and sublime, I have strong Reasons to flatter myself of seeing *MUSICK* do the same.

GEORGE II^d.

By the Grace of God King of Great Britain, France and Ireland Defender of the Faith, &c. To all to whom these Presents shall come Greeting: Whereas, Francis Geminiani, Gent. hath represented unto Us, that he hath with great Labour and Expence, compos'd several Works, consisting of Vocal and Instrumental Music, in order to be printed and published: and hath therefore humbly besought Us, to grant unto him our Royal Privilege and Licence for the Sole Printing and Publishing thereof; for the Term of Fourteen Years. We being willing to give all due Encouragement to Works of this Nature, are graciously pleased to condescend to his Request. And We do therefore by these Presents so far as may be agreeable to the Statute in that Behalf made, and provided, grant unto the Said Francis Geminiani his Executors, Administrators and Assigns, our Licence for the Sole Printing and Publishing the said Work, for the Term of Fourteen Years, to be computed from the Date hereof; strictly forbidding all our Subjects within our Kingdoms & Dominions to reprint or abridge the Same, either in the Like or any other Volume or Volumes whatsoever; or to import, buy, vend, alter or distribute any Copies thereof reprinted beyond the Seas, during the aforesaid Term of Fourteen Years, without the Consent or Approbation of the said Francis Geminiani, his Heirs, Executors and Assigns, under their Hands and Seals, first had and obtained, as they will answer the Contrary thereof at their Perils: Likewise the Commissioners and other Officers of the Customs the Master Warden and Company of Stationers are to take Notice, that due Obedience may be rendered to our Pleasure herein declared. Given at our Court at Kensington the 29th Day of July, 1739. in the thirteenth Year of our Reign.

*By His Majestys Command,
Hollis Newcastle?*

Examples

Of the Element of playing and singing in a good Taste.

1st 2^d 3 4 5

Plain Shake Turn'd Shake Supr. App. Inf. App. Holding the Note

Ditto Stacc. Snatching & falling of Sound Pia F. F. F. Anticip.

Ditto Sep. Beat

The following Examples shew how several of the Elements may be performed on one Crotchet.

Examples

of the Acciacature as Passages of Melody, Appogiature and Tacto for the Harpsichord; Observe, Those Notes with this Mark are to be play'd with one Stroke of the Fingers or by touching the Chords successively from y^e lowest Note upward.

R. Hand L. Hand Ground

Acc. Comb. of Chords App. Comb. of Chords

App. App.

Example II

SONG I

Accompany'd by two Violins two German Flutes Tenor and Thorough Bafs

*The Lads of
Peaty's Mill &c.**Andante*

Pia.

Viol^o Pia

Pia.

For.

For.

Fl.

For

Solo

Solo Pia

Solo

Tutti

Tutti

Tutti

Solo

Solo

Solo

Tutti

Tutti

Tutti

Tutti

Tutti

Viol.

Fl.

4

The Lass of Peaty's Mill, so bon - ny blyth and gay, In spite of

Pia

Pia

all my Skill Hath stole my Heart a-way. When tedding of the

Hay Bare headed on the Green, Love midst her Locks did

play, And wanton'd in her Cen: Cen.

Viol. Fl. Viol.

Fl. Viol. Fl. D.C. D.C.

SONG II

*The Night her silent
Sable wore &c.*

When at her Father's Yate I knock'd where I had often been she throw'd on ly

with her Smock a rose and loot me in.

Pia. For. Pia. For. D.C.

SONG III

When Phœbus
bright &c.

Pia Vio

Fl.
When Phœbus bright the azure Skies with golden Rays en- light-eth: he

Vio. Pia

Fl.
makes all Na- ture's Beauties rise Herbs Trees and Flow'rs he quickneth

For.

Pia.
a- mongst all those he

For.

Pia.

Pia.

Fl.
makes his Choice, and with delight goes thorough, with radiant Beams, and

For.
silver Streams, are Leader Haughs and Yarrow.

For. Fl.

For.

Vio.
D. C. //

Vio.

// D. C. //

SONG III

O Bessy
Bell &c.